



**Saint John Francis Regis
Altar Server Manual**



The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church. Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed to so closely play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist. Your participation as an Altar Server is special. When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ.

Altar Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God. They do it out of love for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Ignatius of Loyola called this attitude "AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM". This means "All for the Honor and Glory of God". It is the motto of a heart of service.

Sometimes, we don't feel like doing our best. Sometimes, we just want to sleep another 5 minutes later; or maybe we even want to just call in sick and let someone else serve.

When we feel that way, we should ask ourselves, "Would I do it if Jesus Himself asked me?"

Would I substitute for a sick server if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I let the new server take my favorite part if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I wear my best Sunday clothes if Jesus Himself asked me?

Would I put aside my daily worries and worldly concerns and instead come serve at Mass if Jesus Himself asked me?

He did ask. And you answered.

Now you have been chosen to be a special minister of the Mass.

As an Altar Server, you will do things that others will never do. You will learn things that others will never know. You will see the Mass in ways that others may never see it. You will do it all for the Honor and Glory of God.

Thank you for saying yes to Him, and welcome to Altar Service!

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME AN ALTAR SERVER

All servers must meet these requirements before they will be accepted to the St. Regis Altar Server Ministry:

QUALIFICATIONS

- Servers' families must be registered members of St. John Francis Regis Parish.
- Servers must actively practice the Catholic faith and should regularly receive Communion.
- Servers must be in the second semester of 4th grade.
- Servers should be currently participating in a program of Faith Formation, either through the Parish Faith Formation Program, or through attendance at a Catholic school, or through structured home study. Servers not meeting this requirement should discuss their situation with the Pastor or Deacon. Accommodations will be made.

INTENTIONS

New servers must meet with the Altar Server trainer to answer this question, "Why do you want to be an Altar Server?"

Altar servers must serve because they feel a personal calling to service. If you feel parents or others are pressuring you to serve, but you don't want to serve, quietly let the trainer know. The trainer is here to assist you. They are happy to help you determine if this is the right time for you to begin altar service. If this isn't the right time, then you are welcome to start again when you are ready.

Servers also must be prepared to meet the commitment required of them. They should understand the principles of Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline.

KNOWLEDGE

A new server must be willing to become very familiar with the Mass. They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during Mass.

Before they serve for the first time, a server will be required to demonstrate that they know the Order of Mass, the prayers of the Mass, and the postures and responses during Mass. All of this will be taught during the new server training period.

Altar Servers must also demonstrate the ability to make use of the "tools of the trade" such as matches, candles, candle lighters, books and sacred vessels. All of this will be taught in training.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Servers must be in a state of grace to serve at mass, meaning they should attend mass each weekend and receive reconciliation on a regular basis.

Altar Servers should come to Mass prepared to meet the Lord at His Holy Communion. They should consider whether they ought to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ahead of time, and, if needed, make appropriate arrangements.

Once an Altar Server puts on the vestments, their conduct always must be professional and reverent. From the time they put on the vestments before Mass until the time they take it off after Mass, an Altar Server is "on duty".

Altar Servers must always show respect for the sanctity of the church and the sacred vessels. The care of the vessels and vestments is a primary responsibility of the Altar Server.

SCHEDULING

Two Altar Servers are scheduled at each Mass.

You will be scheduled by the parish office and schedules will be printed and made available at the sacristy check-in station. If you would like to serve at an extraordinary Mass (for example, Easter Vigil or Christmas Midnight) please let the Parish office know.

The schedule is typically prepared a month or more in advance, three months at a time. Schedules are available in several locations:

- sent by email to you when they are completed
- posted at sacristy check-in station
- listed in the Sunday bulletin the week before your scheduled date

Servers should work with their parents to ensure that they are serving at the Masses for which they are scheduled. However, emergencies sometimes happen. Every server is required to make sure that their position is covered whenever they are scheduled. You must arrange your own substitutes. If, after a valid effort, a server is not able to find a substitute, they should call the Parish office to seek further assistance.

ATTENDANCE

Failing to show when you are scheduled places an unfair burden on the other servers, and disrespects the Altar Server Ministry.

ARRIVAL

Altar Servers must arrive early to prepare for Mass. It is important to arrive before your designated serving time, a minimum of 20 minutes prior to Mass beginning. There are several duties that a server must perform before Mass. Often, there is some additional instructions regarding that day's liturgy that the priest and deacon may need to give to the servers.

A replacement will be assigned for servers not in albs/cassock by 15 minutes prior to the beginning of mass. If the scheduled server arrives late, please be forgiving to the newly assigned servers and let them serve in the position that they are assigned.

Attendance times:

15 minutes before Mass: All scheduled Altar Servers have arrived in the sacristy and are dressed in albs/cassock

10 minutes before Mass: Any server standing by can fill-in for any absent server. Servers arriving after this time are "absent", even if they show up later.

5 minutes before Mass: The lead server "locks-in" the roles: no further changes are made.

All servers are responsible for signing in when they serve. This should be your first duty before Mass.

Servers are responsible for the following items 15 minutes prior to lining up for the procession:

1. Light the four candles by the tabernacle
2. Light the two candles on the altar or light the candelabras on the altar
3. Check the credence table to make sure everything is there
4. Check with the priest or deacon for any special instructions

APPEARANCE AND DRESS

All servers are expected to wear "Sunday clothes" at the weekend Masses. Modesty should be preferred over fashion. Jeans, shorts, and t-shirts are not preferred. "Skorts" of appropriate length and style may be allowed.

Albs are made from lightweight material. What you wear under an alb will show through. For this reason, the server should be sure to avoid stripes and designs of any kind. These distract by showing through the alb. It is recommended that servers wear light, solid colors. White is strongly preferred for the shirt or blouse. Navy blue, tan, or black is preferred for the pants or skirt.

Shoes must be clean dress-style shoes. Black, brown, (or white for girls, shoes should have a conservative heel, and good traction) dress shoes should be worn whenever possible. Athletic shoes and open-toed shoes are not allowed.

Dress code requirements that present undue hardship on a server or their family should be brought discreetly to the attention of the Coordinator so that accommodations can be made.

Servers should refrain from excessive or flashy jewelry or accessories. Headbands and hair accessories should be dark solid colors.

Other than a cross worn over the alb or cassock, and modest earrings for girls, all other jewelry should be removed and left with a friend or parent. Watches may be worn if they are not a distraction to the server or others. Watch alarms must be silenced. Cell phones are not allowed while serving.

Young ladies wearing makeup should prefer modesty. Albs have been stained in the past by makeup. Makeup should never be applied so that it is distracting or so that it is heavy enough to stain vestments.

ALBS and Cincture(Girls)/CASSOCK AND SURPLICE (Boys)

Albs and cassocks are sorted in the vestry by size. Select an alb/cassock that fits comfortably, and is long enough to cover your ankles. Fasten the alb at the waist with a cincture matching the liturgical color of the week.

Tie the cincture in a "girth-hitch" knot snug enough to hold the alb in place.

After Mass, return your alb/cassock to its original place (by size), facing the correct direction. Unknot your cincture and hang it on the proper hook.

POSTURES

The posture of the Altar Server should be one of near invisibility. If people are paying attention at Mass, they should not even notice you. If someone looks at you, they should see a server who is reverent and paying attention. It should remind them that they, too, should be paying attention to the Mass, and not to you.

In general, your posture should be confident, but calm. You should look reverent and prayerful, but comfortable. Move smoothly, but deliberately, not slowly.

Always look "where the action is". When someone is speaking or reading part of the Mass, you are listening to them. When the Eucharist is being consecrated, you are looking at it. When the choir is singing, you are singing with them.

Make no distracting motions or noises. Do not wave, smile, or wink at people. Friends and family will be very proud of you. They may smile or even wave at you. Impress them further by attending to your duties at Mass without acknowledging them. You will have time to visit with them after Mass.

Coughs and sneezes should be covered. Suppress the urge to yawn.

Do not leave your place during Mass for any reason. Bodily needs should be attended to before and after Mass. Servers are not allowed in the sacristy during mass, unless they have been sent to retrieve something by the priest/deacon.

If you are holding anything, you are excused from the hand motions at that time. For example, the server holding the book at the beginning of Mass does not sign themselves, if the book is in their hands.

STANDING

When standing, stand up straight. Balance your weight evenly on both feet, but do not lock your knees.

Anytime you are not holding anything, place your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position". Point your fingertips upward, with the right thumb over the left. Hands should be held comfortably at about the middle of your chest.

If you are holding something, hold the item firmly with one or both hands, as needed. The free hand, if you have one, should cover your heart. Grasp items firmly and deliberately.

When handing something to someone else, make sure they have a firm grip so as not to drop it.

HANDS

Place your hands with palms together, in the "prayer position". Point your fingertips upward, with the right thumb over the left. Hands should be held comfortably at about the middle of your chest.

When holding or placing items with one hand, place your other hand over your heart. You should never have hands to your side or extended out in front of you unless you are being handed something.

PROCESSING

The procession is a sacred act. It is more than just a way for the priest to get to the altar. It is a very formal way of welcoming and glorifying Christ himself into our presence.

When you process, walk at a deliberate, but respectful pace. It should be just slower than you normally walk.

If you are not the lead in the procession, keep pace with the lead.

When carrying something while processing, hold it reverently with both hands and slightly in front of you, not resting on your chest.

WALKING

Walk. Never, run. You are the model of reverence, calm and grace. Walk deliberately to your station. Watch for others in your way and plan ahead to step around them. Never get in the way of the presiders, or of any minister holding the Blessed Sacrament. Hands are folded prayerfully or firmly grasping whatever you may be carrying.

SITTING

While sitting, sit up straight, not slouching.

Feet should be directly in front of you. Legs should never be crossed. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are placed on top of thighs.

Respond to prayers and sing songs deliberately, and fully participate in the Mass.

KNEELING

While kneeling, keep your torso up straight, not slouching or resting on feet. If kneeling behind a chair or pew, do not lean over it. Feet should be directly behind you. Keep your legs and feet still. Hands are folded prayerfully.

BOWING

Never bow when carrying the cross or candle.

There are two types of bows:

The bow of the head: Lower your chin to your chest and hold it there briefly. There are several times in the Mass when this is done. Also, anytime a priest bows to you, return the bow with a brief head bow.

The profound bow (full bow): Bend at the waste and bow forward (like a Japanese greeting). This is used during the Profession of Faith and a few other times.

GENUFLECTING

Never genuflect when carrying anything.

With your back straight and your hands folded prayerfully, lower yourself onto your right knee, and hold that position briefly. You will almost always make the sign of the cross when genuflecting.

Genuflecting to the tabernacle, whenever Jesus is reserved in the tabernacle, is required. Our Lord's presence in the tabernacle is usually signified by the red sanctuary light. When it is not lit, the tabernacle is empty, as on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

ITEMS TO KNOW



Chalice



Paten



Pall



Flagon



Cruet



Chalice Veil and Burse



Lavabo and Towel



Corporal



Purificator



Alb and cincture



Cassock and surplice

ITEMS TO KNOW cont.



Monstrance



Ciborium



Aspergillum
and Bucket



Thurible
and Boat



Ablution Cup



Tabernacle



Sanctuary
Lantern

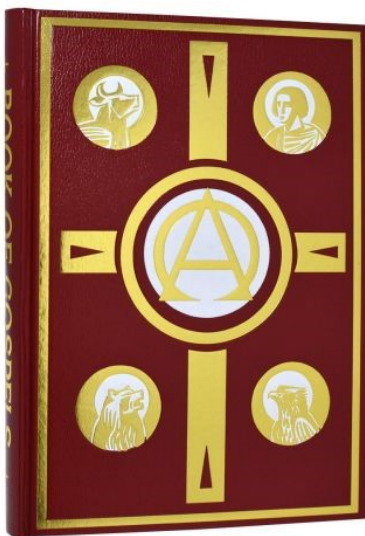


71PC30
Processional
Height 24 1/2"
Catholics Only
High Priest

The Sacred Sacrament of the Eucharist is reserved in the Tabernacle in the Sanctuary of the Church.



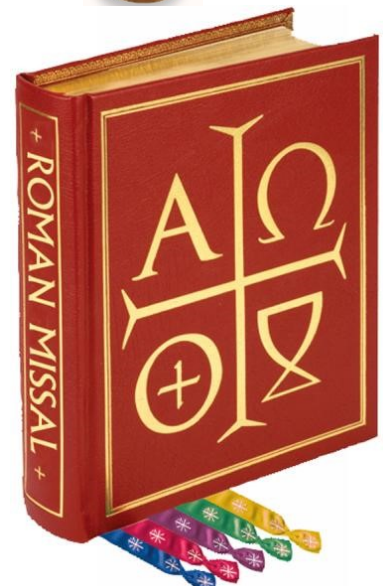
Pyx



Book of the Gospels or
Evangelarium



Missal Stand



Missal or Sacramentary

Other vestments



Chasuble (Priest)



Stole (Priest)



Cope

Humeral Veil



Dalmatic (Deacon)



Stole (Deacon)

Introductory Rites – Part I

Entrance Procession

Cross Bearer gets the cross. All wait quietly in the back with the priest and the ministers.

- Procession begins once lyrics to song begin.
- Cross Bearer should hold the cross reverently.
- Do not lean the cross on the entrance door or anywhere it potentially fall.

Cross Bearers set the pace by walking very slowly and reverently.

- Always wait 3 steps between each other when processing

When you get to the front corner of the altar, wait for each person to line up.

- Carrying something = pause, bow your head slightly
- Not carrying anything = you would pause, genuflect/bow reverently.

Priest proceeds to altar first – once priest gets to the altar the cross bearer and server move forward

- Walk to your seats and remain standing.
- Always sit and stand in unison, when possible

Collect

Father will use the Missal/Sacramentary

As soon as the Book Holder hears the priest say the words “Let us pray” retrieve the book and bring it to him.

- There are usually two times during the Mass when this happens – at the beginning before the readings and again at the end after communion.

Note: There are exceptions during special Masses which include sacraments, baptisms, funerals etc. but you will be told about the changes beforehand. Be alert and ready to hold the book whenever the priest motions to you that he needs the book, even if he has not yet said “Let us pray”.

Hold the book exactly where the priest places it.

- Hold the book with your hands on the edge of bottom corners and rest book against your chest
- Watch the priests’ eyes until he finishes.

When finished, bow your head (only) to the priest, and return the book to the holder, and take your seat.

Liturgy of the Word – Part II

First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading

Sit and respond (eyes on action and hands on top of thighs)

Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia) and Gospel

Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action)

Homily

Sit and listen (eyes on action)

Profession of Faith

Stand and respond (prayer hands and eyes on action)

Make a PROFOUND BOW at the words “and by the power of the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”

Universal Prayer

Stand and listen (prayer hands and eyes on action)

Liturgy of the Eucharist – Part III

Offertory

Preparation of the Altar

When the Deacon finishes the Universal Prayer, the servers and Deacon begin to prepare the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Book Holder brings the book to the altar and places it at the far left of the altar, leaving room in the middle for the Corporal to be placed.

The other server:

- Set the veiled chalice on the center of the altar.
- Go back to the credence table and bring up the wine (Cruet/Flagon) and water and set it on the right side of the altar.
- Place the four communion chalices on the right side of the altar.

Prayer over the Offerings

Preparing for the Consecration

When the priest/deacon has finished pouring out the wine and water, one of them will return cruet/flagon to a server stationed by the altar. Bow reverently to the priest/deacon, and return the cruet/flagon to the credence table.

The other server should bring the bowl and pitcher and towel to allow the priest to wash his hands.

- Move towards priest and stop. Don't make the priest come to you.
- Do not make the priest wait.
- Towel = Left side - Drape the towel over one arm
- Lavabo (Bowl) = Center
- Water = Right - pour just a small amount of water over the priest's fingers and pause while he wipes his hands.
- Then bow to the priest and return the bowl, pitcher and towel to the credence table.

Preface

Stand with hands folded through the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy...)

Ringling of the Bells

Upon reciting the Holy, Holy, Holy prayer, all servers kneel along with the congregation.

Epiclesis

When the priest removes the pall and extends his hands over the offerings you will ring the bells.

1 twist of the wrist

Elevation

When the priest holds up the host and is completely elevated and stops =

3 twist of the wrist

Same for the cup

Eucharistic Prayer

Staying kneel with hands folded through the remainder of the Eucharistic Prayer. Sing and Respond as appropriate.

Communion Rite

After the Doxology and the Great Amen, all stand, with prayer hands

The Sign of Peace

When the priest/deacon calls for an exchange of Sign of Peace, reverently give the sign of peace to each other.

Lamb of God

Stand with prayer hands

Communion

When the priest consumes the precious blood you will ring the bells once.

After the priest consumes the body and the blood of Jesus, the servers will receive the Eucharist, wait for the altar to clear and after receiving communion, one server will wait to clear the Missal/Sacramentary from the altar while the other returns to their seat.

- The distribution of Holy Communion is a very holy time and the Altar Servers should sit quietly and prayerfully.

Purification of the Vessels

Once the deacon/priest begins to return the ciborium to the tabernacle, one server will bring a cruet of water to the altar. The priest/deacon will begin to purify the vessels with the water. When he completes the purification of the ciborium(s), he will hand you them to return to the credence table. The other server will approach the altar and wait for the priest to fold the corporals and prepare the chalice. When finished, you will retrieve the veiled chalice and bow to the altar and return the chalice to the credence table.

Concluding Rites – Part IV

Greeting and Blessing (Closing Prayer)

After a few moments of meditation, the priest will say “let us pray” at which point the book bearer brings him the book [as discussed in section 3].

Upon the concluding prayer, return the book to its place and go back to your seat.

Dismissal and Recession

Go in peace = cross bearer retrieves the cross

The Saint Michael prayer will be recited.

When closing hymn lyrics begin = Cross bearer goes leading the other server

The Cross Bearer proceed to in front of the ambo with the other server and stand

The Priest and Deacon will line up in the front of altar and kiss the altar.

When the Priest and Deacon genuflect, any Altar Server with something in their hands should bow their head only.

All turn and process slowly to the back of church.

Once in the gathering space, the cross bearer will turn the cross toward the priest and deacon. The priest will say “Praise be Jesus Christ” all will respond “Now and forever”. The priest will give the servers a blessing.

After Mass

Extinguish the candles and return them and the cross to stand in the back of the church.

Don't run back to sacristy – remain reverent until you have removed alb and left sacristy

Replace Albs and cinctures in correct spots

No Servers leave until everything is done.